



Hyde Park, N.Y., c.1856 Johann Hermann Carmiencke

Two landmark chapters in the history of the Hudson Valley began in the fall of 1825. First, the opening of the Erie Canal provided a gateway to the Great Lakes and western products, placing the Hudson River at the center of American commerce. New York City, the anchor for the Hudson Valley region, soon eclipsed Boston and Philadelphia as the nation's principal seaport and financial center.

That same year a young painter from New York first ventured up river into the Catskill Mountains to sketch the glories of nature. Thomas Cole's paintings inspired the Hudson River School, a collection of landscape artists who over the next fifty years expressed a passionate reverence for the land that became part of our regional identity.

From early on, the Hudson Valley region has combined the strength of the river economy with the scenic appreciation of both wilderness and working landscapes. The Hudson carried sloops and barges bringing goods to market, as well as dayliners and pleasure boats heading to riverfront estates and resort hotels. Later industrial uses did not always mix with the romantic images, but as historian Paul Wiltach noted, the essential nature and traditions of the Hudson Valley still prevail.

"What is perhaps more significant of the enduring and dominating character of the river is that, with all its superficial growth and change, it has never lost its primeval impressiveness...The units of busy life here seem to punctuate Nature without prevailing over it. Nearly all that has come to it in three centuries seems to have enhanced its natural beauty and splendor."

Paul Wiltach, *Hudson River Landings*, 1933



Vanderbilt National Historic Site, Hyde Park



Dover Plains, N.Y., 1848 Asher B. Durand

The paintings of the Hudson River School have been described as both “panoramic in vision and precise in detail.” The Greenway Compact Program has a similar range of attributes, combining a panoramic overview of the region with the detailed knowledge and experience that comes from local participation.

With every change, every demolition or new development, we should be reminded of the Hudson Valley’s heritage and landscape legacy. Our everyday actions combine over time into regional consequences. Choices we make now and in the next few years will determine if unsustainable sprawl, traffic congestion, overpaving, and pollution will begin to dominate our county. An initial test for any public decision should be whether it contributes to the Hudson Valley environment, both its natural beauty and its economic vitality.

A basic premise of the Greenway goals is that environmental values can coexist with and even improve economic development opportunities.

Manufacturing and computer technology



IBM, Town of Poughkeepsie

Tourism



Balloon Race, Town of Wappinger

Agriculture



Town of Amenia

Dutchess County’s top three economic generators are all compatible with Greenway goals